



CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY

FOR RELEASE:
December 4, 2008

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Three-Year Schedule Outlined for High-Speed Train *Board Meeting Kicks Off Aggressive Effort to Launch System and Stimulate Economy* *Federal Funding Expected*

San Jose, CA– The California High-Speed Rail Authority Board, meeting for the first time since voters passed Proposition 1A, received a briefing Wednesday from project management team leader Parsons Brinckerhoff on what will be needed over the next three years to launch construction of the nation's first high-speed train system.

Proposition 1A provided a \$9 billion down payment for building California's 800-mile system of trains running up to 220 miles an hour.

Judge Quentin Kopp, chairman of the High-Speed Rail Authority Board, noted that much work already has been completed, including comprehensive environmental studies necessary for determining the train route and station locations.

"Now, the project-specific detailed environmental studies that show exactly where the tracks will be laid are underway throughout the state," said Kopp. "We are thrilled to be getting to work and we are encouraged by the signals coming from Washington DC that high-speed trains will be a priority for the new Administration and Congress."

Members were briefed at the board meeting on plans to begin building the system by Project Manager Tony Daniels of Parsons Brinckerhoff. Daniels said environmental and engineering work will be completed in the next three years for routes from Los Angeles to Anaheim, Los Angeles to Palmdale, Palmdale to Fresno, Fresno to Merced, Central Valley to San Jose, And, San Jose to San Francisco.

Actual construction should begin in 2012 on the alignment preparation, laying of tracks and civil structures. The backbone of the system – running from Los Angeles through the Central Valley to San Francisco – is expected to be completed by 2018 to 2020.

Boost to California Economy

High-Speed Rail Authority Executive Director Mehdi Morshed touted the job growth potential of the 220 mile-per-hour system. "As California's most ambitious attempt to stimulate our local economy, the statewide high-speed train project will draw upon and expand California's skilled workforce, creating nearly 160,000 construction-related jobs to plan, design and build the system," he told board members.

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"An additional 450,000 permanent jobs are expected to be created as a result of the economic growth the train system will bring to California. The immediate economic benefits of building this train cannot be understated: it's jobs, jobs jobs at a time when Californians need them," said Morshed. "With an increasing sense of urgency to stimulate our economy emanating from the new Administration in Washington DC, we expect to secure federal sources of funding quickly to build upon the down payment of Proposition 1A funds."

Federal Funding Sought

High-speed train planners have identified three funding sources from Washington, D.C. First, the new Administration and Congressional leaders are drafting an economic rescue package devised to inject billions of dollars into local infrastructure, including transportation.

Second, John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) have authored The High-Speed Rail for America Act of 2008 which proposes investing more than \$23 billion for high-speed rail projects around the country. The bi-partisan legislation seeks to transform America's outdated and underfunded passenger rail system into a world-class system. This groundbreaking legislation is co-sponsored by California Senator Dianne Feinstein and supported by Governor Schwarzenegger's national infrastructure coalition, "Building America's Future."

Finally, federal funding may also come from the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008. Signed by President Bush in October, this new law reauthorizes Amtrak and authorizes \$1.5 billion over five-years to finance construction and equipment for 11 high-speed rail corridors, including California.

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